



BEYOND THE BASICS

Things to Consider for First-Time Cat Owners

Looking for the purrfect addition to your family? If so, you may just be looking to add a feline companion to your household. Cats can be loving, loyal, and affectionate pets, but they do require some special care and responsibility. Getting used to those new responsibilities can take time, especially if you have never owned a cat before, but stocking up on these cat essentials can make the transition much less stressful for you and your new feline friend.

Pet Insurance Policies

Cats need regular wellness exams, and emergencies can pop up without warning. So, before your vet bills become overwhelming, you may want to look into pet insurance. Pet insurance is similar to your own health insurance, except that most pet insurance policies provide reimbursements for vet care rather than paying for it upfront. Different companies and policies also provide varying degrees of coverage. For instance, some come with higher deductibles, some only cover emergency vet care and some, like Embrace, [provide help](#) with routine vet expenses. So, if you think pet insurance will help with your cat's costs, be sure to research your options. Comparing vet prices and buying medications online can also [offset cat care costs](#).

Self-Cleaning Litter Boxes

If you plan on adopting a cat, you need to be prepared for litter box duty. While many cat owners see [cleaning the litter box](#) as an unpleasant chore, this task is crucial for protecting your cat from infections and diseases. A dirty litter box can also expose you and your human family members to dangerous bacteria, so make sure you are committed to keeping litter boxes tidy. You will need to scoop your cat's litter box at least once per day, but you will also want to dump litter out and wipe it down with water and a gentle cleaner. Liners can also make litter box management much easier or you can consider buying an [automatic litter box](#). These handy litter boxes take care of the scooping for you, so that you don't have to worry as much about hazards to your cat's health, risks to your health, or odors around your home.

Kitty Cat Super Highways

Have you taken the proper steps to [cat-proof your home](#)? If not, you should do so before you bring your new cat into your home for the first time. In addition to spaces to snuggle and sleep, cats can also benefit from having higher areas to perch and explore. Also known as "superhighways," the most trusted cat experts often recommend installing shelves in and around your home to provide your feline family member with extra security and comfort. This can be especially important for welcoming new cats into your home, but there are alternatives for providing comfortable perches for your new cat. Instead of lining your walls with shelves, for example, you can always [buy a cat tree](#) or two, so that your cat has a place to rest and play.

Interactive Cat Toys

Last but certainly not least, you will want to ensure your cat has plenty to play within your new home. A cat tree can give your cat something to jump up on and play with, but taking time out of your schedule to [play with your pet](#) can also be important. Playing with your cat can help establish trust and build a bond that is sure to last a lifetime. Not to mention that playing with your cat can also [prevent feline obesity](#). While there are plenty of adorably fat cats on the internet, carrying even a little extra weight can be extremely dangerous for your cat. If you want to keep your cat active while you are at work or away, also pick up some [interactive cat toys](#).

Becoming a cat owner can be such a major transition. So, make room in your budget for vet bills and essential cat gear, but also make plenty of room in your day for play and bonding. With this and the helpful items mentioned above, you will be well prepared for life with your new cat, as well as prepared to keep your new kitty companion happy and healthy.

Photo Credit: [Pexels](#)

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